

REGISTRY UPDATE



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

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Managing Meaning Today and Semantics Tomorrow: 2005 System of Registries Conference

This article provides a recap of the System of Registries (SoR) Conference held on May 5, 2005 at George Washington University's Cafritz Conference Center in downtown Washington, D.C. Conference presentations are available at www.epa.gov/sor.

EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) recently hosted a one day conference highlighting current services and future directions of the System of Registries (SoR). The theme of this year's conference—Managing Meaning Today and Semantics Tomorrow—emphasized the enterprise-wide benefits that can be realized through the association of terms with meaning.

The keynote presentation was delivered by Kim Nelson, EPA's Chief Information Officer. Ms. Nelson described EPA's leadership in shaping the Federal Enterprise Architecture, and encouraged continued Agency support for Federal Data Architecture.

Cindy Dickinson, Chief of the Data Standards Branch, delivered her vision for bringing greater meaning and organization to the Agency's information resources in order to expand their usage and value. She described the role that EPA's registries currently play, and how planned enhancements will support future customer needs.

EPA's Larry Fitzwater and Linda Spencer delivered a presentation titled *The Environmental Data Registry (EDR) and Management of Meaning*. This session provided an overview of basic concepts and

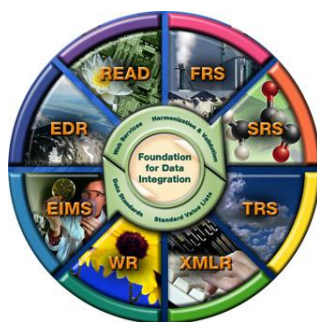
principles associated with meaning management, as well as important business rules. They also explained how ISO 11179—the international standard for metadata management—is designed into the EDR to manage key data element metadata and code sets.

In addition to meaning management, this year's conference also focused on the user community perspectives. Kerry Leifer described EPA's Office of Pesticides Programs (OPP) use of SRS to provide standardized nomenclature for the OPP Information Network (OPPIN) database. OEI's Gail Froiman discussed efforts to create record-to-record linkages between SRS and the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Explorer to ensure that TRI Explorer provides its users with accurate chemical identification information.

Captain Bill Hess from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) highlighted the role of SRS as a federal standard for non-drug chemicals. He also discussed future interactions between EPA's SRS and FDA's counterpart system. Dennis Murphy of Delaware's Department of Environmental Quality demonstrated the SRS Web service, a recent enhancement that will allow states to dynamically pull SRS content into their information systems.

Separate breakout sessions for the Registry of EPA Applications and Databases (READ) and the Terminology Reference System (TRS) afforded participants an opportunity to hear about planned enhancements to these registries and provide feedback. During both sessions, participants provided additional input for enhancing the registries. This feedback was incorporated into existing requirements gathered from interviews with managers and staff from various agency programs.

EPA's Larry Fitzwater moderated a forum on *Best Practices in Federal Registry Management*. It



included Jerome Garrett from the Census Bureau, Diana Young from the Federal Aviation Administration, and Dr. Laura Reese of Healthcare Technology Solutions International. Panel members encouraged data managers to employ creative approaches when engaging customers in using and building registries. Other suggested best practices were to use existing international and national standards whenever possible and to maintain a high expectation of data quality throughout the data cycle. The panel also encouraged learning from others, such as the Federal Data Registry Users Group.

The final session titled *Exchange Network Use of Environmental Data Standards* focused on the schema development activities, the XML Registry, and the use of data standards related to the Network. OEI's Pat Garvey discussed the need for the Exchange Network and XML registry and Dawn Banks-Waller described the benefits of using data standards to facilitate exchange of environmental information.

SoR Conference Presentations Now Posted

If you were unable to attend the 2005 SoR Conference, presentations from the event can be downloaded off the SoR website (www.epa.gov/sor). Once at the site, click on "Presentations" on the left side of the home page to access the presentations. For further details about this event, please contact Michael Pendleton at 202-566-1658 (pendleton.michael@epa.gov).

Terminology Reference System – Full Speed Ahead!

Following up on the requirements gathering session conducted at the SoR Conference, terminology stakeholders and users from EPA met in June for a Joint Requirements Planning (JRP) meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to gather requirements for the acquisition of terminology management software that would meet both current and future Agency needs.

Participants identified and prioritized over 300 requirements. These requirements built upon those gathered earlier this year from individual interviews

with program offices and OEI staff. EPA is exploring all options for the TRS including off-the-shelf software to meet future Agency terminology management needs. Candidate tools will be identified and evaluated against user requirements and a choice should be made by the first quarter of 2006.

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For more information, please refer to the appropriate EPA point of contact:

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